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America's great city school systems are in real trouble. They haven't enough money for teachers and classrooms. Their inner-city schools are crowded with students who require services which the schools have never had to provide on a large, organized scale. They have too few teachers, many of whom are inadequately prepared to teach the disadvantaged child. They are losing high school students at phenomenal rates. As many as 60% who enroll in the tenth grade may drop out before graduation.

Discussion of these and related problems is divided into four major categories. The first concerns the issue of financial support for public education. The problem lies, not in the lack of ability to tax the citizens, but in the restriction of fiscal support to particular tax sources so that the collection of adequate amounts of revenue places an undue burden on these sources.

The second problem area involves the adjustments of curriculum and services that are required to prepare youth to go from the world of school into the world of work. Teacher training, the third problem area, must prepare teachers to cope with the disturbing reality of the urban classroom. The final problem area concerns the methods that schools must use to reach, teach, and hold in school the inner-city child of limited background.

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the culturally deprived
educating the disadvantaged

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PHOTO / Steffens Leinwchl
PHOTO / Ronald Nameth

In Philadelphia, a tall, gaunt woman, with a little blue hat pinned firmly atop her graying head, strides up the steps of a dilapidated row house and through the open door. A flat iron arcs by her head and clatters on the sidewalk outside. She ducks like a veteran and continues undeterred, toward the staccato, high voice of a very angry woman, the lower, rougher voice of an equally angry man.

"It's Mrs. Holmes, from the school," says the gaunt lady, over the row. There is a quick, taut silence. Recognition. "Hush now, it's Mrs. Holmes," comes from the woman, calmer now. "Come in, come in. We . . . ah, talking about some things."

"I believe you were," says Mrs. Holmes wryly. There is laughter, and the sounds of smaller voices—the voices of children—greeting the school lady, Mrs. Holmes.

Mrs. Holmes is a school-community coordinator at the Dunbar school, paid beginning teacher's salary for 12 months of walking, talking and good labor. She goes to the homes of her people, reaches out in any way possible to help them help their children. "I do what I've got to do. If some children bring a family row to school with them, acting edgy, I go to the home and we talk about it." She is a long-time resident of the Dunbar community. Her children went through school there, and her roots are deep in the neighborhood. She is the liaison for the school, tying it to parents and neighbors, working to solve problems in homes which affect the child in school. She supervises a network of block commanders, who spread information about the school, about meeting times and activities for children and parents. She checks in on the home study centers located throughout the community, places where children can come for supervised study, to use the stock of dictionaries, encyclopedias, and other reference books kept there.

What is all this? In Philadelphia, it's called the School-Community Coordinating Team, involving seven inner-city schools in depressed areas—a demonstration project, which is testing different ways to reach and teach the disadvantaged child.

The School-Community Coordinating Team means bi-lingual Puerto-Rican coordinators to work with the large Spanish speaking population of Philadelphia's inner-city. It means reading and arithmetic specialists who have brought different ways of teaching and different materials to many children who were failing miserably with the traditional methods and curriculum.

The Coordinating Team is one of dozens of promising practices being evaluated, in action, by fifteen large city school systems. The staffs of the schools involved have new hopes for themselves and their children. Failure is no fun for teachers, either. As for Mrs. Holmes, who is very honest, particularly

with a lazy mother who gives her children a piece of candy for breakfast: "It works. I see it work everyday. It isn't enough, but it's a start."

The superintendents and Board of Education members of these fifteen largest city school systems* at a meeting six years ago in Atlantic City, New Jersey, decided that talk about the problems of education in large urban areas was not enough. They set up, within the next year, various projects, each testing in action practices which might provide more effective education for inner-city children and youth.

America's great city school systems are in real trouble. They haven't enough money for teachers and classrooms. Their inner-city schools are crowded with students who require services which the schools have never had to provide on a large, organized scale. They have too few teachers, many of them poorly prepared to teach the disadvantaged child. And they are losing high school students (dropouts) at phenomenal rates. In inner city high schools, as many as 60% who enroll in the tenth grade may drop out before graduation.

These and related problems are divided into four major categories. One by one, each has been attacked, studied, and "solved"—in the sense that urban educators now feel they know which way to go and what will work. But for a variety of reasons, they haven't been able to go very fast. The first, and most critical problem, is that of money.

*Baltimore, Boston, Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, New York City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, San Francisco, Washington, D.C.

problem one: fiscal policy

What is to be the source of the money? What sort of equitable tax structure will provide adequate revenues to support the hardpressed urban public schools?

The gravity of the fiscal problem of the urban public school systems simply cannot be exaggerated. It is a problem of direct concern to the citizens of these cities. But also it is a problem to be shared by the states and nation at large.

The public school administrators calculate how much money they need by the size of enrollments and the quality and scope of the educational program they wish to provide. An adequate number of teachers and other staff is the first, and most costly, consideration. Classrooms, which in some cities are in shorter supply than teachers, is a close second.

To present a conservative estimate of the sheer size of the fiscal problem in the great cities, two bases are used for comparison. The first is the actual number of professional staff members (teachers and administrators) per 1000 pupils in 1960 in each city. It ranged in the various cities from 38.6 to 46.9. The second is the minimum adequate number (50-60) of professionals per 1000 pupils. Experiences with minimum adequate and higher ratios are conclusive—the best education seems to come out of the school systems whose ratios run to 55 professionals per 1000, or higher. And none of these is a Great City (600,000 plus population).

To maintain even the 1960 pupil-staff ratios, each school system in this group will have to increase its operating costs by 1965. Estimates for 1965 range from 7.5 to 39.4 per cent over expenses for 1960. To raise staffing standards to 50 per 1000 pupils would require from 22.3 to 61.5 per cent increase over the expenses for 1960.

Large outlays of funds will be necessary to provide more adequate school facilities. All great cities have forecast steadily increasing school populations through 1965.

Special programs and unique services, which are absolutely necessary to provide adequate education for all city school children, will cost money which otherwise might be used for regular activities. Estimates for programs and services required *now* run as high as 30% of total operating costs.

There is simply not enough money available to do the job. The fiscal problem of the great cities is where to turn for large proportionate increases in school revenue. Is the solution merely to extend the limitations on existing local sources? Or is there a necessity to spread the burden of financial support among other sources of taxation?

Can the Great Cities raise enough taxes to support the schools from sources now legally available

to the school system? Do these legally available sources reflect the true ability of the cities to support schools in terms of the total of all forms of economic wealth? Most tax revenues are drawn from the total economic wealth at three primary sources, called tax bases—real property (real estate tax), business transactions (the sales tax), and income (income tax).

For example, in 1960 Chicago had 30.2 per cent of pupil enrollment in the state and 30.9 per cent of assessed property valuation. At the same time this city had 41.6 per cent of net buying income, 42.0 per cent of retail sales, and 42.8 per cent of personal income. Thus Chicago is relatively more able to support education in terms of personal income and buying power than it is in terms of taxable property. And access to these tax bases would spread support of schools more equitably among citizens.

The citizens of Chicago have no state or local income tax, and thus, they do not have direct access to the relatively most able sources of taxation.

The results of projected estimates are conclusive. They indicate that new sources of revenue must be found immediately to meet the operating and capital needs of the public school systems in the great cities. Funds needed are so large that a mere raising of limitations on present tax sources will be inadequate. Basic changes must be made in the fiscal policy for support of public schools.

The major problem is not lack of true economic ability of the city to tax its citizens for support of public education. The difficulty lies in having fiscal support of the public schools so severely restricted to particular sources of taxes that the collection of adequate amounts of revenue places an undue burden on these sources.

It is one thing to state that all appropriate tax bases should be made legally accessible. It is quite another thing actually to *obtain* legal access. Politics and the realities of power do not favor the great cities. Important are the conflicting points of view and interests which often bring competition rather than cooperation to the relationship between the outstate and the urban areas, with the peripheral suburbs tacking back and forth between these two extremes. Generally, state legislatures reflect outstate-rural interests, and generally outstate and rural interests do not favor the income tax—the most able tax base, least used by schools. Reapportionment may gradually move the legislative balance to equal representation of highly populated areas. But currently, prospects are bleak. Only New York City has been able to gain legal access to all tax bases, without undue strictures.

problem two: the world of work

What adjustments of curriculum and services are required to prepare youth to go from the world of school into the world of work?

In St. Louis, a 16 year old boy named John hits bottom in high school. "I got the really bad grades, and I guess I had a fat mouth for a couple of teachers I thought were nowhere." He was referred by his counselor to a work-coordinator, a key member of the St. Louis Public Schools Work Experience Program. John's aptitude and intelligence tests were good. The coordinator took them to one of her contacts in the community, the manager of an auto bump shop. He hired John in for 20 hours a week, at $.90 an hour.

"It took time, of course," the coordinator said," and we had some wild arguments about school. John said it was flaky, a waste of time. I said that was one man's opinion." All of a sudden, John started to pull out of it. He worked trig and history in the morning, and straightened wrinkled fenders in the afternoon. "Shut the fat mouth, too. Too busy to talk." Today, right now, he's still in school, shooting for college and an engineering degree. Where would he have been if it weren't for the work experience program? Ask him. "Walking the streets, walking by the school. Shamed to come in. Watching TV. Feeling my empty pockets." A shade of difference between what might have been, and what is.

We trace most of our "dropouts" and their problems back to inadequate and poor learning (or poor response to and understanding of what was begrudgingly and joylessly learned), back to the beginnings of school. The schools have difficulty in reversing the incapacity of many students to energize themselves, to turn their ability, creative and intellectual, to something they choose to do. The dropout does not leave school simply because specific job training is not available. The whole school setting feels wrong, or inappropriate. He may be either sick of his own failure or mediocre achievement, or he may be bored because nothing interests or challenges him.

But the vocational side of things needs a look. Technology and automation have made many of the vocational skills *now* being taught in our schools obsolete. This obsolescence will accelerate and compound the difficulty of the problems faced by the schools. What are they to do about it? Can industry, unions and management, work more closely with the schools? Is a federally legislated work experience program, in conjunction with the typical high school's academic preparation, an appropriate solution?

Two million youth 16 to 21 years of age, out-of-school and out-of-work and doing virtually nothing, hints at the immensity of the problem. The school's holding power is down and its education of many youth, particularly in the lower socio-economic strata and in the racial and ethnic minorities, has proven inadequate right across the board, from the guidance and counseling function to the development of the requisite basic skills of reading, writing, arithmetic. Nearly two million young men and women, their numbers growing every day, dropped out of the nation's high schools, and graduated from them, inadequately prepared for life and living. Some are returning to school, or staying in, because of the St. Louis Project, and similar efforts in Chicago, Buffalo and Detroit.

The problem is not one of job preparation or job opportunity alone. What happens to youth whose hope and expectation are replaced by discontent and disillusionment? What happens to the young man or young woman who tries to find a beginning in work, but cannot, whose purpose dissolves day by day in pointless boredom? What do they come to feel about a society which paradoxically excludes while it includes them, cares for them with reasonable adequacy while depriving them of the sense of worth and dignity incumbent in work, independence, a place. We do not train youth up to a life of leisure, a life of dependence upon subsidy, private or public. We train youth up to work, and all else has its place, its worth, beside work—a job, for wages or salary. The system is, as are its youth, at an impasse. But the problem is by no means insoluble. It is simply larger and more complicated than the means currently available to cope with it. The Great Cities may provide effective practices—work experience, counseling and guidance, and community contact-employer recruitment techniques. But educators have not, until recently, gathered together to present a united statement of the problem and effective solutions. Nor have they hit very hard. This is in part because they are not entirely sure what is to be done about the disadvantaged youth, the drop-out, appropriate preparation for the world of work, and a plethora of related problems. All but the most outspoken critics and commentators have tended to be cautious, to say: "Our schools are good, but . . ." Actually, the argument, stated directly, might run "our schools are understaffed, overcrowded, inadequately financed and quite unable in their present state to prepare youth adequately for today's and tomorrow's world."

problem three: teacher training

What can teacher training institutions do to prepare teachers to cope with the transition from sweet and reasonable college of education theory to the sometimes disturbing reality of the urban classroom, from the amenable young model of school growth to the disaffected child who prefers to grow up somewhere else, and lets it be known?

A complete review of teacher education, with an eye to some basic changes, would have both an immediate and long-range effect on the disadvantaged child. Teachers graduated from colleges of education are often simply not ready to teach, particularly in the inner city. Most teacher training institutions offer minimal practice teaching experience, and usually that is in a "typical" school. Detroit, New York, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston and other great cities are working on a limited basis with local colleges and universities, testing internship programs in an urban school situation. This kind of experience in the middle, as well as at the end, of the formal teacher education process, exposes the intern teacher to situations which sternly test a head full of pedagogy and precepts. Internship for teachers might become proportionately as exhaustive as that which doctors and case workers go through. Certainly an inept and poorly prepared teacher can, in certain situations, do significant damage to individual students. The likelihood could be minimized with an appropriate program of on-the-job training.

Generally, new teachers coming into the inner-city school part too easily with all the sound theory they have learned. Sound theory of education is very difficult to implement. It takes long hours of preparation, great skill, and a functional understanding of human nature as it goes through a complex but definable process of development and growth. It may be too easy to listen to that cynical time-server down the hall, who advises the anxious and unsure new teacher to throw all that problem-solving stuff out the window, along with the unit approach, class discussion and the whole idea of getting response from kids, and proceed on the assumption that learning is unlikely and that it is better to be safe, hold minimum expectations, and try to get through the day without incident. Be stern. Stick to the text. Watch out for class discussion. These children wander from the text when they talk, and ask difficult questions, and are likely to get out of hand. It is better to keep them quiet.

Which teaching "technique," old-style or new, traditional versus innovative, doesn't really matter here. What matters is the loss of hope and expectation which can distort the teacher's perception and deprive the children of the opportunity to learn.

In-service training is an important part of a teacher's orientation to the inner city. Most teachers in inner-city schools bring to the classroom a life experience very different from that of the families whose children they teach. Appropriate changes in teacher perception must occur to insure reasonably objective reactions to child, family and neighborhood, and to insure the teacher's positive expectation of the child's capacity to learn. The teacher's first perception may be of a child who neither looks, nor acts, as a proper child should look and act in order to learn. Somehow, the teacher must become aware

of this child's whole life, including all of his life which contributes not one whit to success in school. Then, with this understanding, the teacher must look at the child again. Then she may see, beneath the passivity or the discontent, one who has salted away his eagerness, his uniqueness, in such a way that she hadn't suspected—a child who can learn.

At North Division High School, Milwaukee, Mrs. Dorothy Carter, the teacher of a Great Cities Project induction class, is working on writing with her students. They are 15-19 year olds, most of them in-migrants from the rural south, who were screened into this class to receive intensive remedial teaching and services until they are ready for regular school.

The students write plays and compositions, trying out words, linking them up to say things never said before. New words are learned because students want to know "how do you say you feel about someone . . . how someone looks at you . . . the name of a warm thing you get when a day is good and birds singing." The details of spelling and grammar come later. They would, in these beginnings of expression, stifle what needs to be voluble and constant. In the classroom students are writing, and then it is time to listen.

A strapping boy named Micah, a few months off a tenant farm near Flora, Mississippi, stands by his chair and reads. These are words Micah chose, and they talk out a piece of his life.

"I've had a walk as far as from here to town with a big tank of cotton seeds strapped to my back. I'd twist that crank and the seeds would fall in the furrows that the plow had made. We didn't have to go to school—we needed the money from work. It was hard to make enough for something to eat."

"We have to work too hard for $2 a day. Sharecroppin'. We worked till half-day and then stop and eat a box of soda crackers. Some of the folks take their food. They have it hanging from the trees branches in big greasy bags, biscuits soaked in syrup, or they go to the store and get a hunk of cheese. On weekends we go to town. Town folks call us 'country Rays.' Bea, he like to get him a good drink of whiskey. Country folks smoke Prince Albert all week. On Saturday they get a package of ready roll. Them juke joints, babies can go in them. Little boys that high smokin, nobody don't care. Up here, you can't go in. Down there is nothing to do but stand around on the road. Sometimes we get mad and fight just to make somethin' happen."

What goes on in the classroom, in relationship and exchange between a given teacher and a given group of children, is still the most crucial aspect of school. A vegetable, even an intellectual vegetable, cannot make much happen in this exchange. A committed and responsible individual can. Teaching is not acting, or an ego exercise, or a lecture, or subtle coercion. Teaching is the process of eliciting response from children. In this response is learning.

problem tour: the inner-city child

How can the school's consistently and effectively reach, teach and hold in school the child with limited background, the child whose poverty of experience and expectation out of school severely limits his success in the typical school situation?

In Baltimore's Early Admissions program at the O'Donnell School—the teacher and the children are doing their colors. Billy Arley has a double chin and no pronunciation at all. He says "pick" for pink, and "bron," and "wit," and "popo" for purple. At home he talks mono-syllables. In school he slugs other kids because he doesn't know how else to let them know he likes them. By the time Billy gets to Kindergarten he will have talked enough to say a sentence, to pronounce words correctly. His teacher will show him how to reach out, how to play instead of slug.

Simple little things, all these problems of Billy Arley. But they grow, in overcrowded schools, serving disadvantaged kids who have more problems than any teacher can handle. Billy would be terribly behind by the time he got to the third or fourth grade. What is dealt with early, in preventive fashion, in the Baltimore pre-school project, is the kind of little stuff that would become reading retardation, school failure, dropping out, delinquency, and a host of other problems, difficult for Billy, his teacher, and the community in which Billy lives.

Who is this child, this Billy Arley, or who are these children, and why are we worried about their education?

One-third of the 3,700,000 children enrolled in the nation's fifteen largest school systems are disadvantaged. One of every three. The prognosis for 1970 is one out of two. What makes them disadvantaged? In a way, "poverty of experience" is too stark. But no matter what is present in this child's life, or what is missing, there always seems to be one common denominator: he has not enough. He and his family have not enough income, information, skills to get along successfully, no precedent for success; insufficiencies of many sorts.

This child is poorly prepared and poorly motivated for school. He seems, in one teacher's words, "not very hopeful, not very comfortable here, as if he thinks he'll not do very well." Yet, this child has normal intelligence. He is not limited in this respect. He can learn well, can grow up in school, if reached by what the school offers. But the typical disadvantaged child in the typical classroom is indifferent, purposeless. He does not respond to normal teaching methods and subject matter. His capabilities remain unrealized.

Why? There is no ready-made answer. But the question is compelling: and here is a simple proposition. Many of our schools are inadequate, because they are typical. The typical school is not prepared to compensate for what must be seen as pervasive limitations in a child's background. The traditional responsibilities of school staff, and the objectives of the typical school's services, are based upon a rather uniform "successful American" social and economic pattern, and are inconsistent with the

pattern of non-uniform social and economic forces, many of them delimiting and depressing, which affect the child whose "disadvantage" is simply a life pattern which tends to work against, rather than for, success in the typical school.

Then there is the problem of numbers. Once, when such a child was not typical, he could be fostered and helped by the concerned teacher. Or he could leave school and grow up somewhere else. Today, this child and others like him fill classrooms. There is no other place for these children to go. They are in school, to be dealt with, to be reached and helped to succeed, or to vegetate, or to rebel.

In a classroom at the Douglas School in Chicago's urban renewal-torn district 11 is Marvin. Douglas houses a "school within a school" for boys and girls 11-14 years old who are overage in grade. Without help they probably will not have the reading skills to be successful in a Chicago High School. The Douglas program includes intensive guidance, special materials—such as initial reading units built around newspapers and mail order catalogs, for children who hate schoolbooks—and excellent teaching of a highly supportive, individualized kind. The teacher is asking the children to define different kinds of writing. What is Fiction?

"Fiction," says Marvin, who has raised his hand, "is writing that sounds true, but really it isn't. It is something from the imag . . . imagination." Marvin, a tough and intelligent 12-year old, into and out of one school after another, falling farther behind, until he got to Douglas. Marvin, is the oldest of a string of surprise offspring. "Marvin," his mother would say to him, "Marvin, you're the ugliest boy I've ever seen. You are a limb of Satan." Marvin didn't like himself very much. He didn't like where he lived. "It's a hole. It's a dump." he said. He had no food many nights. When he came to Douglas, he recognized many of the kids there. They had sat in school offices together. This looked to be the end, and he said to the lady in charge, Mrs. Isbitz: "Look at us. I know J. D. I know Henry. And that girl, I know her."

He was convinced he'd never graduate. But he was accepted, interviewed, tested and fitted into place in the non-graded program. His teachers worked with him, expected things of him—taught him. It wasn't easy. He guessed and he missed, he lied, shouted, was silent, threw things and dropped things and scribbled in his workbook—testing everybody, everything, with all the old tricks that angry, alienated children use, and some new ones he thought up by himself. But the teachers treated him honestly, fairly. He couldn't put them down or fluster them. And they didn't put him down, either. People listened to him, and asked him questions, and answered his questions. He couldn't stand it. He began

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to work, to read. He read his way out of the newspaper and the catalog units and into the schoolbooks, from 2.6 to 5.6 in one year. He wrote about the life of Marvin. About how his mother was hit by a truck and not hurt bad but she had to go to the hospital, and a pretty neighbor lady came and helped him take care of his brothers and sisters because he didn't know how, and the welfare man let the neighbor lady spend his mother's check, and they ate good and he got denim pants and a shirt. And how he takes a bucket down to the fourth floor, where the water is, and carries water up to the sixth floor, where he lives, to wash his clothes and himself. And how the wires run from the third floor, where the electricity stops, out the windows to the top floors, and up the stairs to the top floors, like spider webs.

For Marvin, the Douglas school is absolutely significant.

All the Great Cities Projects for the disadvantaged child proceed from the premise that these children can be effectively and economically educated by:

A program of education adapted to their needs,

Modifications in the organizational patterns within the school,

Proper selection and utilization of personnel,

Improved utilization of instructional equipment and materials, and

Involvement of parents and of the community in the educational program.

Since, 1960, the Ford Foundation has provided partial financial support (usually 20-40% of a project budget) to eleven Great Cities. Foundation support has made it possible to "buy time," by intensifying Great Cities Projects and expanding their coverage.

What works? What practices have proved most effective in terms of the number of students they reach and the impact they have on attitude, behavior, motivation, achievement? And how much does a practice cost? No matter how much a hard-pressed Great City may want certain practices, it must select the practices which have the most effect for the money spent. A basic principle which seems to apply here is that of prevention versus rehabilitation. Prevention is far less wasteful of funds and human beings. Pre-school promises rich rewards as a preventive practice, as does the pre-service and in-service training of teachers, and the utilization of various structures, such as team teaching and the non-graded primary, which allow teachers to act, individually or in concert, in the interests of instruction and according to the requirements of varying numbers of assorted children.

Essentially, promising practices developed in the Great Cities projects do three things:

They modify or replace traditional materials and teaching methods, if these have proven inadequate in teaching the disadvantaged child.

They provide compensatory services which enhance learning and make more effective teaching possible.

They extend and augment the role of the school in areas critical to the child's successful development, areas where family and out-of-school support, as normally provided, has insufficient, or negative, effect.

(Typically, however, school staffs have attempted to revitalize and reinforce the home, and not replace it.)

As an example, the concept of the community school, implemented in Detroit, includes extensive parent involvement in clubs, classes on child care, nutrition and food buying, sewing, leadership training (oriented to block clubs and community councils), and discussion groups built around such likely subjects as "How to help your child graduate from high school." all are designed to increase the positive effect of the home on the child.

Wherever projects have involved a total school staff, as in Cleveland's Addison Junior High School, Pittsburgh's team teaching schools, or New York City's Special Service Schools, the classroom teacher has been surrounded by a matrix of appropriate services. Generally, these services have helped the teacher function much more successfully in the classroom. Referral for children who distrupt classes and need intensive casework, for children who cannot read, frees the teacher, in conscience and reality, to work with children his training enables him to handle. From demonstration teachers and consultants the teacher learns techniques and materials adapted or developed for the disadvantaged child.

New York City's Special Service schools receive 20 per cent more services than the regular schools. For the first time they are holding, and even attracting teachers. What was once a hopeless situation from which teachers fled has become a challenge. Of 1300 carefully selected teachers appointed to Special Service schools in September 1963, 600 were volunteers. And when Hunter College placed 60 teacher candidates in special service junior high schools for internship, 48 elected to join the regular staff for the following year.

Other promising practices include:

—trips, to zoos, on a train, to dairies and farms and bakeries, to museums and art festivals and concerts, all as an integral part of curriculum, as a part of study units, which for these children must actually include the experience to be studied.

—transitional and special preparation classes, for in-migrants from rural areas (Milwaukee), for sixth graders who are inadequately prepared for the seventh grade (Cleveland), for students phasing out into the world of work (St. Louis, New York), for students who dropped out and are coming back for regular school or low-order skills training (Detroit, Chicago, Los Angeles).

—talent preservation classes for students whose marginal intelligence (79-90), poor adjustment to school, and poor achievement, put them in limbo somewhere between special education and regular school (Houston).

—specialists in reading, to develop programs in reading (Philadelphia, Buffalo), or to augment the

classroom teacher's efforts (Washington, D.C.).

—new methods and materials in mathematics, language arts, and other subject areas, and for the Negro child and youth, new textbooks and developmental materials which acknowledge his existence and give him, on his own terms, a reason to read . . . in a San Francisco elementary school, a little Negro boy leafs through his first reading primer, and stops. He points to Jimmy, the boy hero of the primer series, and says to his teacher, "Hey! I know him!" Jimmy and his family are the first Negro characters to appear in 277 years of American reading primers. And they are a Great Cities project development (Detroit). Jimmy and his family live in the city. They do things city kids do—roller skate, help mother hang out the clothes, scrape knees on cement sidewalks, dress up in big people's clothes, put the cat in a shoe box. The primers are short, the stories full of surprises and humor (even for a slightly childlike adult), and the illustrations are bright and active and full of clues about what sort of things might happen on the next page.

—finally, a dispersion of services and activities into the community, a crumbling of the walls of the traditional fortress school. The use of detached workers, study centers, school-promoted community organizations and block clubs, all school-oriented, but not school-centered.

These are a few of the practices proved effective. Properly implemented, they can make schools serving depressed areas work.

But of millions of disadvantaged children and youth, only a small percentage are getting the schooling they will need to grow up well, to function independently as adults. It is a sobering situation, and one which embitters the committed teacher and saps his hope and his energy. Both hope and energy are expendable if there is recompense, some return on the teacher's investment. But there is depressingly little.

It is a difficult thing to admit that the education of Americans to the needs of the schools is as formidable (and obviously as basic) a task as are those of holding the dropout, educating the disadvantaged child, and preparing youth for the world of work.

Too many of us don't see the problem. The disadvantaged are concentrated in the dense centers of great cities, isolated in the rural slums. Some of us feel the rising costs of education in our taxes, and take a hard line on all schools. And some advocate a return to the three Rs, McGuffey's Reader, and upper-track, "survival of the fittest" academics—the fact and rote and regimentation of the good old days.

But we can't go back. The problems and challenges remain and grow, and the only thing to do is to go to work on them—hard.

Just so, the ground upon which school leaders must stand has shifted. They have been asked to account for the non-reader and the dropout. Certainly, educators are accountable for the products of their schools. But they do not educate in a vacuum. They must actively assert themselves in matters of fiscal policy, political and social change, as responsible men and women, if they are to present, in this decade and the next a decent accounting of the schools.

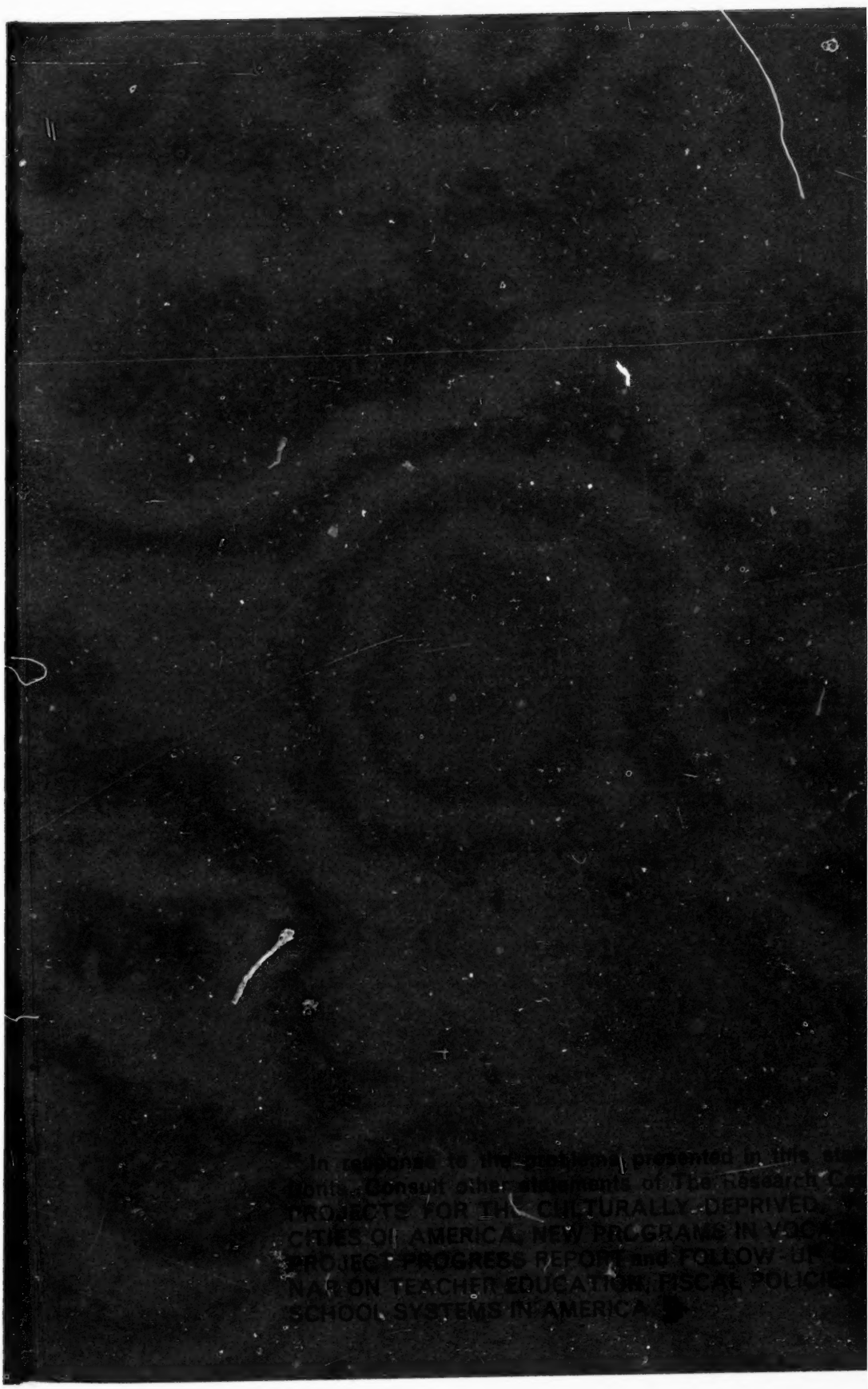
The effects of discrimination by race, ethnic background, or social class, in housing, employment, and civil rights carry over into the school setting, and affect the attitude of the child to learn, have hope for himself, belief in himself, understanding of what he is, and thus of what he can be.

The problems of the urban schools cannot be isolated from causes. Poverty, unemployment, de facto segregation, discrimination and unequal opportunity are society's problems. They have a most tragic effect upon children and youth. The seeds of problems similar to those of the great cities are everywhere, in the rural slums, the back streets of a thousand cities and towns. Urban educators are finding out, with their Great Cities Projects, more appropriate and effective ways to educate inner-city children and youth. Some of these ways should prove adaptable, and basic enough to have real value to all school systems.

The Great Cities have much to offer. But how do they reach the unconcerned and the uninformed, the men and women who support schools, the "hard-to-reach" taxpayer and citizen, with the simple, hard facts of urban education? And how do they reach beyond the unconcerned, to those who, for various reasons, do not wish to see any changes, in the schools, the cities, or the institutions and systems which order our lives? What does it take to jar people into perceiving the relevance, and the threat, of millions of dependent citizens growing up in the Great Cities?

If the role of the school is to prepare, then educators must act upon prognosis, plan for change before crises occur. Educators must assume activist, change-making roles. Yet, activism must have a sound philosophical base, and the change-maker in schools courts the ruin of his institution unless he develops a reasonably consistent plan for change, a considerate means to a fortunate end. One thing appears certain at this point: the end cannot be achieved by the means which he may, for lack of something better, have to choose—the traditional way, the academic, multi-tracked, structurally and methodologically rigid way, with its single curriculum, its delimiting class bias, its inadequate pre-service preparation of teachers. Educators cannot make real progress toward the achievement of academic and social competence for all children and youth without a systematic renascence of education relevant to the requirements of the millions of disadvantaged Americans.

It is a job which they cannot do alone.



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